

The Kanawha Despatch: perfin isn't as tough to find as information

Steve Grabowski (#3409)

The Kanawha Despatch (Dispatch) perfin—K25—is not as elusive as the history of this railway. For more than four years I have found almost nothing to identify what this railway was other than it was a subsidiary of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway. Numerous requests to railroad historical societies resulted in no response.

In desperation, I made an e-mail request to

The NN & MV was a holding company which leased or had track rights of several small railroads on the East Coast, and in 1888 leased the C&O Railway and the C&O Steamship Company for westward expansion.

By 1890, the NN & MV was broken up, probably bankrupt, but the C&O reorganized and the Kanawha Dispatch stayed operational.

The C&O was built to Huntington, WV, and to reach the mid-

ally the C&O built their system to Cincinnati.

The Kanawha Dispatch was disbanded on May 1, 1918, when the railroads were taken over by the United States Railroad Administration. After WW I, the C&O resurrected the Kanawha Dispatch and it was operational for some period of time.

The U. S. perfins catalog lists the verified user of K25 as the Kanawha Despatch (the *d-e-s* spelling, I believe, is the English version of the Ameri-

time with the Big Four Lines, and two agents in New York City. The form was preprinted with identification of Old Dominion Steamship Co. as receiving goods from a merchant, S. Slater & Sons.

The relationship of Old Dominion Steamship Company to the C&O is not known but it could be a part of the C&O Steamship Co. The Bill of Lading shows a logo of Kanawha Dispatch, while the Way Bill has a logo of Kanawha Dispatch Routes.

Some of this information was used to prepare album pages for my collection of railroad perfins, which is the only perfins I collect and study.

I would like to confirm some of the above. If any Club members have covers or stamps with legible CDSs I would appreciate photocopies or lists of stamps.

Related to this fast freight line there is another, Blue Ridge Dispatch, perfin pattern B204, which was also part of the C&O but so far I have had no luck in finding anything about this line.

Can anyone help?

You can reach me at 315 East Lynnwood Avenue, Arlington Heights, IL 60004-3930 or you can e-mail me at swg27@aol.com.



the Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society and received my first response from Al Kresse who has been researching this railroad. He has furnished a wealth of information and, although not complete, I feel it should be shared.

The Kanawha Despatch was a through (fast) freight line organized by the Newport News & Mississippi Valley Company and began operations on May 1, 1884.

west. The Kanawha Dispatch used the Ohio River to reach Cincinnati and connect with the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis RR (the Big Four Lines) which leased trackage rights to the C&O to connect with Chicago and St. Louis. The C&O leased trackage rights with the Western Kentucky Railroad to reach Louisville, Kentucky, and then by the Ohio River to Cincinnati. Eventu-

can *d-i-s* spelling). This English spelling may have been used in the NN&MV era.

The American spelling is confirmed by a copy of a Bill of Lading of 1901, a Way-Bill of 1904, and an undated photograph of a boxcar with the C&O markings and the logo of the Kanawha Dispatch.

The Bill of Lading dated March 25, 1901, shows Kanawha offices in Cincinnati, which were shared at one